



Health and climatic hazards: Framing social research on vulnerability, response and adaptation

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Abstract:

Floods, windstorms, drought and wildfires have major implications for human health. To date, conceptual advances in analysis of vulnerability and adaptation to climatic hazards from the environmental and social sciences have not been widely applied in terms of health, though key progress is being made particularly in relation to climate change. This paper seeks to take this conceptual grounding further, examining how key themes relate to health concerns, exploring connections with existing health literatures, and developing an organising framework to aid analysis of how vulnerability to health impacts varies within society and how actors make decisions and take action in relation to climatic hazards and health. Social science research on this theme is challenging in part because of the complex mechanisms that link hazard events to health outcomes, and the many-layered factors that shape differential vulnerability and response within changing societal and environmental contexts (including the dual effect of hazards on human health and health systems, and the combination of 'external', 'personal' and 'internal' elements of vulnerability). Tracing a 'health impact pathway' from hazard event through health risk effects to health outcomes can provide a research tool with which to map out where the different factors that contribute to vulnerability/coping capacity come into effect. (c) 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

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Resource Description

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Air Pollution, Extreme Weather Event, Food/Water Quality, Food/Water Security, Food/Water Security, Other Exposure

Air Pollution: Allergens

Extreme Weather Event: Drought, Flooding, Landslides, Wildfires, Other Extreme Event

Extreme Weather Event (other): Windstorms

Food/Water Quality: Pathogen

Food/Water Security: Food Access/Distribution

Geographic Feature:

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resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Global or Unspecified

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Infectious Disease, Injury, Mental Health/Stress, Morbidity/Mortality, Respiratory Effect

Infectious Disease: Foodborne/Waterborne Disease, Vectorborne Disease, Zoonotic Disease

Foodborne/Waterborne Disease: General Foodborne/Waterborne Disease, Other Diarrheal Disease

Vectorborne Disease: General Vectorborne

Zoonotic Disease: General Zoonotic Disease

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Mood Disorder

Medical Community Engagement:

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

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Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Low Socioeconomic Status

Other Vulnerable Population: Pre-existing medical conditions; People with low mobility

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article, Review

Resilience:

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

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Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content